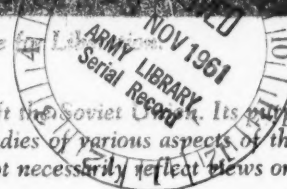


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A NEW COMMUNIST-SPONSERED "INSTITUTE OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS"

To inspire "friendly action" by the American public in behalf of the Soviet Union is the aim of a new Soviet organization, the "Institute of Soviet-American Relations."

The highlights of the charter meeting for the Institute were the opening speech by Mme. N. V. Popova, a tested Party functionary with long experience in organizing international groups, and the main address by Academician N. N. Blokhin, President of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences and a noted surgeon.

Blokhin called on the institute members to apply "new and intense efforts" to the establishment of co-operation between the Soviet and the American peoples. The subsequent speeches endeavored to give an impression of support in depth for the institute by claiming to represent all layers of Soviet life in endorsing the institute.

The importance that the Soviets attach to the institute becomes apparent when one reads the impressive array of names connected with it in an official capacity. There is Nina P. Khrushcheva, wife of the Soviet Premier, a vice-president; there is also S. A. Gerasimov, a well-known film director, and the list includes G. A. Zhukov, member of the Communist Party Central Committee. It seems likely that the institute is meant to be a launching platform for a large scale propaganda drive in the United States.

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No. 2, 1961/62

A NEW COMMUNIST-SPONSORED "INSTITUTE OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS"

A new weapon has been added to the Soviet propaganda arsenal. This is the "Institute of Soviet-American Relations," an organization for "friendly joint action by the general public of our countries." The new outfit is designed evidently to disrupt American unity by appealing directly to American public opinion on behalf of the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, the institute's aim will be to convince the Soviet public of Khrushchev's peaceful intentions.

The institute was founded on August 31, in the midst of a campaign of vituperation against the United States government. The creation of the institute was described in a long article in Pravda on September 1, 1961. Prospective members of the institute, said the article, met in Moscow on August 31 and "expressed the wish of many civic officials and organizations" that such an institution be established.

The charter meeting of the new institute was opened by Mme. N. V. Popova, a tried and tested Party functionary of long experience in international Communist enterprises. In addition to being a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, she is Chairman of the Committee of Soviet Women, Presidium Chairman of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Presidium Chairman of the Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace, Vice-President of the pro-Communist International Democratic Federation of Women, and an official of still other organizations. Mme. Popova stressed in her introductory speech that the formation of the institute symbolized "an outstretched hand of friendship to the American people" and was "an expression of the Soviet public's desire to promote a solution of the major problems of our time."

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The main speech at the assembly was made by Academician N. N. Blokhin, President of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, who also stressed that the Institute of Soviet-American Relations was being formed on the initiative of "eminent public officials, public organizations in the Soviet Union and scientific, cultural, industrial and agricultural workers." Declaring that the Soviet and American peoples had an equally great historical responsibility for the future of the world, he outlined Soviet opinion on this problem as follows:

There is a sure basis on which, through our common efforts, we can build a bridge of friendship and co-operation spanning the ocean and linking our peoples for their common good. This basis is peaceful coexistence... The public of both countries can and must play a vast part in the rapprochement of the Soviet and American peoples and in the creation of a common atmosphere of our points of view. That which draws us together... will depend on the activity, energy and selflessness of public organizations and officials. We believe that only through new and intense efforts from each and every one of us-Soviet citizens and Americans-can the path to mutual trust and peaceful co-operation between the USSR and the U.S. A. be laid... Friendly joint action by the general public of our countries will help eliminate mistrust and suspicion in relations between the USSR and the U.S. A., replacing them with good will, mutual understanding and peaceful and friendly co-operation. To promote such co-operation and pave the way for it is the aim of our institute (Pravda, September 1, 1961).

In conclusion Blokhin called on the Americans and "all decent people of this planet" to join with the Soviet people in their fight for general and complete disarmament, peace and friendship between nations.

Following Blokhin's speech, a large number of "enthusiastic" speeches approving the formation of the institute were delivered by representatives of the arts and the sciences, by education, factory and collective-farm workers, and even by the Soviet government in the person of USSR Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade N. N. Smelyakov. The meeting heard a welcoming address by the well-known composer Dmitry Shostakovich. An institute board of directors was elected, and, to the accompaniment of "enthusiastic applause," a motion was passed to send a suitable message to "public and cultural organizations, persons in the world of culture, science and the arts, representatives of business circles and all citizens of the U.S. A." The first session of the new board elected the institute president and 16 vice-presidents.

An interesting feature of this new Soviet move is the prominence in Soviet life of the persons chosen to head the fledgling organization. It's president, Professor Blokhin, though a relatively young man, has a high reputation both in the Soviet Union and abroad as a surgeon and pathologist. He is known to be an outstanding organizer. Since he enjoys the confidence of the Party leadership, Blokhin has several times attended international

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scientific congresses and conferences, always subtly combining erudition with an infusion of propaganda for current Soviet policies. The most noteworthy of the vice-presidents of the institute is Mme. N. P. Khrushcheva, Khrushchev's wife, who thus for the first time enters the Soviet political limelight. She will probably be kept busy endeavoring to tone down the effect produced in the U.S. A. by her husband's more intemperate anti-American outbursts. Another vice-president is the well-known Soviet film director S. A. Gerasimov, who has been active for many years past in the World Peace Council and who is also deputy chairman of the Soviet-Chinese Friendship Society. Among the other vice-presidents is G. A. Zhukov, member of the Central Committee and chairman of the State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Zhukov, who is one of the foremost Soviet experts on foreign propaganda, was for five years chief foreign political affairs editor of Pravda. In his new position on the board of the institute, he will in all probability act as the representative of the Party and transmit its instructions. Blokhin's position in the institute is purely decorative, like that of the other Soviet public figures "elected" to run it. The real policy-makers have remained in the background, and have, of course, received no mention in the Soviet press.

The founding of the institute, with its non-political appearance, is a highly significant political move in support of Soviet foreign policy. It seems likely that the creation of the institute is a first step in Soviet preparations to mount a large-scale propaganda drive in the near future, aimed at the government and the general public of the United States. As to support in the Soviet Union, there is not a shred of evidence that the idea of the institute has met with widespread approval among broad sections of the Soviet people, and among the top intelligentsia in particular. The only Soviet paper to mention its formation was the Party organ Pravda. The institute may indeed represent something in the nature of a concession to popular demand for relaxation of present Soviet-U.S. tensions. But the main job of the institute will be to act as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy by attempting to influence public opinion in the U.S. A. and thus hamper the U.S. government's policy toward the Soviet Union.

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